

*Theology vol 23.*

CURSORY  
ANIMADVERSIONS

UPON

FREE AND CANDID

DISQUISITIONS, &c. *on what?*

TENDING

To clear up and explain the NECESSITY

OF A

Review of the LITURGY.

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That you will continually pray to GOD the Father, by the  
Mediation of our only Saviour JESUS CHRIST, for the  
heavenly Assistance of the HOLY GHOST.

*Exhortation in the Office for Ordaining Priests.*

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L O N D O N:

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CURSORY  
ANIMADVERSIONS  
UPON  
FREE AND CANDID  
DISCUSSIONS &c.  
TENDING

To clear up and explain the Necessity

OF A  
Review of the EPISTURGY.



That you will continually give to God the Father, by the  
Mediation of our only Son Jesus Christ, for the  
heavenly Assistance of the Holy Ghost.  
Laborem in the Office for Ordaining Priests.



L O N D O N:  
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MDCCLXXII



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ject of Worship; or, What is the Form in which Christians ought to pray.

To this they have thought fit to make the following Reply, in a *N.B.* at the End of the second Edition of that Book.

*N. B.* “ The friendly Informations  
“ and Remarks, relating to the *Dis-*  
“ *quisition*s, dated June 19, and di-  
“ rected to the Editors, touch upon  
“ a Subject, which the Authors do  
“ not *choose* to concern themselves in,  
“ any farther than they have already  
“ done, in the *Disquisition*s; which  
“ contain all the *main* Articles that  
“ they had to offer, in Pursuance of  
“ their *general* Plan. And they have  
“ only



## ADVERTISEMENT. vii

“ only to add here, that though they  
“ differ from this Writer in their Sen-  
“ timents about some Points, (which  
“ they humbly suppose he hath not  
“ sufficiently proved, in the Papers  
“ he has obliged them with) yet they  
“ will not take upon them to dissuade  
“ him from applying to more *compe-*  
“ *tent* Judges, and to just Authority;  
“ if he hath Reason to believe, that  
“ his doing so will be of real Service  
“ to Religion, and to the Church esta-  
“ blished in this Land. He may  
“ probably judge it proper to re-con-  
“ sider the Argument, before he takes  
“ any farther Measures, to give it the  
“ Force he may desire and intend.”

## viii ADVERTISEMENT.

Such an *evasive* Answer I did not expect from Men, who profess such Candor and Sincerity, and pretend such a Zeal for the true Worship of God.

“ They do not *choose* to concern themselves any farther in that Subject than they have already done in the *Disquisitions*; which contains all the main Articles they had to offer, in Pursuance of their general Plan.”

Ought not this to have been the *main* Article in their Plan, *viz.* To whom Christians ought to offer up their Prayers? or in what Manner they ought

## ADVERTISEMENT. <sup>ix</sup>

ought to *pray*? — To this they have not *chose*, I will not say *dared*, to say one Word.

But though they don't think fit to answer to this themselves, they are so good as to allow me, — “ to apply  
“ to more *competent* Judges; — if I  
“ have Reason to believe, that the  
“ doing so will be of real Service to  
“ Religion, and to the Church esta-  
“ blished in this Land.”

If they are not *competent* Judges of this Subject, why do they write at all about it? But is it not a Shame to hear Men, who take upon them to reform the Liturgy, say, — “ They are  
“ not

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“ not *proper* Judges, in what Manner  
“ Christians ought to pray ?”

What they mean by my doing real Service to the Church established by Law, I leave to them to *explain*. I thought it might be *sufficient* to do Service to Religion, by shewing wherein the Worship of Christians consists, according to the Scripture ; however it might differ from the Public Worship by Law established.

“ I have *re-considered* the Argument.”—And I do here call upon them in the most solemn Manner, to give an Answer to it, as they hope not to incur that dreadful Denunciation of our Saviour, viz. *Whosoever shall be ashamed*

## ADVERTISEMENT. xi

*ashamed of me, and of my Words, in  
this adulterous and sinful Generation,  
of him also shall the Son of Man be  
ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory  
of his Father, with the holy Angels.*



CURSORY



# ADVERTISEMENT

appeared of me, and of my Words, in  
this adulterous and sinful Generation,  
of him also shall the Son of Man be  
rejoiced, when he cometh in the Glory  
of his Father, with the holy Angels.



CURSORY



CURSORY  
 ANIMADVERSIONS  
 UPON  
 FREE AND CANDID  
 DISQUISITIONS, &c.



THOUGH, for several Reasons, I must confess, that I never expect to see any *farther* Reformation in Religion, either in Point of Doctrine, or of Worship, and especially the latter; yet, from the general good Character which is given of *Free and Candid Disquisitions*, I was inclined to read it over; when I was not a little surprized to find it to be true, what the Editors say of it, *viz.* "That it is a Performance, not altogether of a Piece, in Point of Stile, and not so unexceptionable as could be wished, in some other Matters." *Preface, Page 11.*

And how indeed could this be otherwise, when it is confessed ; — “ That the Design hath been  
 “ under Consideration, and carrying on leifurely,  
 “ from time to time, for fome Years, by feveral  
 “ Gentlemen, who *contributed* their Obfervations,  
 “ which were at length brought together, and  
 “ digefted into fome Order ?” *Ibid.* Page 3.

A Book written in fuch a Manner, muft be a *confused* Heap or Medley of Things, thrown together, without any Order or Connection : And fuch I find the *Disquisitions* to be.

If thefe Gentlemen had intended a thorough Reformation of the Liturgy, or at leaft in the moft material-Points, (and unlefs they had done this, in my humble Opinion, they had much better have left the Liturgy as it is) they would have fet the Scriptures before them, and examined ; — What Rules or Directions our Saviour and his Apoftles have given us concerning Prayer ; and, What was the Practice of Chriftians in thofe Days ; — and then have fhewn, Wherein the Liturgy was conformable or contradictory to it.

But inftead of this, there is no mention made of thefe Things : As if the Scriptures had really given no Directions, how Chriftians ought to pray ; or had left it to the Governors of the Church or State, to eftablifh what public Form of Worfhip they thought beft.

Now

Now besides that this reflects the greatest Reproach and Dishonour on Christianity, and its divine Author, to suppose, that He, who declared He was sent by God, has not given us as plain and as full Directions, as *Moses*, by the Command of God, gave to the *Jews*, how Christians ought to pray;—it plainly justifies and authorizes all the Superstition and Idolatry of the *Church of Rome*.

I am not ashamed to confess, that I think a Review of the Liturgy to be as necessary as these Gentlemen can think it to be; I may add, much more necessary than they can think it to be; because I am thoroughly satisfied, which they declare themselves not to be, that the Liturgy is not *conformable* to Scripture, in the most *essential* Point, viz. *The Object of Worship*.

But that we may not take a Review of the Liturgy, in the confused Manner our Authors have done, I shall consider it in these three Respects, viz.

I. As to the Length of it.

II. As to its being easy to be understood by Persons of all Capacities.

III. As to the Object of Prayer, or that Form or Manner, in which Christians ought to pray.



Now, if the Scripture has given the plainest Directions in these three Points, is it not very unaccountable, that our Authors should not lay these Directions before their Readers, and enquire how far the Liturgy is conformable to them?

This I shall endeavour to do, without being afraid of giving Offence, or being ashamed of Christ, or of his Words.

In the first Place, as to the *Length* of our Prayers, our Saviour has given us the plainest Directions.—*When ye pray, use not vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do, for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what Things you have need of, before you ask him.*

It is true, this is spoken with regard to *private* Prayer, but the Reason of the Thing holds as strong, with regard to *public* Prayer.

I will not deny, that our Authors have pointed out several unnecessary Repetitions in the Liturgy. But there are others, which they have passed over.

To instance in the *Litany*. Is not almost the Whole of it a needless Repetition of the same Words, both in the Minister and the People? How often are those Words repeated by the Minister,



nister, — *That it may please thee?* And how often the Responses by the People, — *Good Lord, deliver us;* and, *We beseech thee to bear us, good Lord?* besides other Repetitions, both by the Minister and the People, at the End of the *Litany*.

If these are not vain Repetitions, I know not what can be called such. Nor can I account for our Authors passing over these, and objecting to the Repetitions of the *Lord's Prayer*, and the *Gloria Patri*.

Were it not better, that the Substance of the *Litany* were comprized in one Prayer?

And were it not better, that the *Collects* were reduced to a much less Number, which would prevent the frequent Repetitions of the same Words at the Beginning, and the End of every Collect?

The Whole of the Communion Service, might, I think, very properly be omitted. For what Necessity is there of reading the Ten Commandments, which gives Occasion for the Repeating of the same Response by the People? or of the Epistles and Gospels, when other Portions of Scripture are read?

And as to the *Nicene Creed*, I shall have no Objection to the Reading of it, when it can be proved, either that the Bulk of the People can form any

Notion of the following Clauses; or, that any two learned Men agree in the same Sense of them, viz. "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, of one Substance with the Father?"

Our Authors propose another Method for shortning the Morning Service on Sundays, viz. That whereas formerly it was three distinct Services, it ought to be used at three different Times. But I think there is no Necessity for this. The Whole may easily be reduced to one Service; so as not to be too tedious, or clogged with needless Repetitions, and the same be used in the Morning and Evening upon a Sunday, only the Psalms and Lessons to be different.

And as to the Service for Saints Days, I think there are unanswerable Objections against the Use of any such Service, as I shall shew hereafter.

I come now, in the second Place, to consider, Whether the Liturgy be, in all the Parts of it, plain and easy to be understood by all Men.

St Paul, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, chap. xiv. hath sufficiently shewn the Absurdity and Impiety of offering up Prayer in the Church, either in a Language that is not understood by all; or in Words, the Meaning of which is not easy to be understood.

We

We have indeed so far reformed from the *Church of Rome*, that our Liturgy is composed in the Language of the Country. But we retain all, or most, of the unintelligible Part of the *Roman* Liturgy; which, though it be rendered into *English*, is as unintelligible to almost all the Congregation, as if it were in *Latin* or *Hebrew*.

The Remarks which our Authors make on this Head, are very just.—“Divine Offices should be free from all Matters of doubtful Disputation. For however right a Proposition may be in itself, it can scarce be thought right by Men of Peace and Piety, to interweave it, in a dogmatical and scholastic Form, with our Addresses to the supreme Being.”

Had our Authors examined the whole Liturgy by this Rule, they had done well, and acted consistently with themselves,

But how inconsistent is what immediately follows?—“Were it not likely to be more invidious than useful, it would be easy to point out some Expressions, in one of the most solemn Offices of our Church, which are thought to be extremely improper in applying to the Almighty.” *Disquisit.* Page 322.

Our Authors, I suppose, mean here the *proper Preface upon the Feast of Trinity* in the Commu-

nion Service, *viz.* “ Who art one God, one  
 “ Lord, not one only Person, but three Persons  
 “ in one Substance. For that which we believe  
 “ of the Glory of the Father, the same we believe  
 “ of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, without  
 “ any Difference or Inequality.”

What is meant, “ by being more *invidious* than  
 “ *useful*,” I don’t well understand. But it seems,  
 because it would be invidious to propose the leav-  
 ing out this Preface on Trinity Sunday, therefore  
 it ought to be continued; though they confess,  
 “ That it is extremely improper to apply to the  
 “ Almighty in this dogmatical and scholastic  
 “ Form.” — If this be not to be more afraid of  
 offending Man than God, I think nothing can be  
 so.

Besides, How can our Authors expect that our  
 Governors should agree to a Review of the Li-  
 turgy; when they themselves, either don’t *know*  
 or don’t *choose* to speak out, what Amendments  
 they would have? One, or other must be the  
 Case.

And will not Those, who oppose a Review re-  
 tort it upon them; and say; — “ If the *Preface*  
 “ *for Trinity Sunday* be suffered to be used, there  
 “ is no Occasion to omit the *Athanasian Creed*, or  
 “ any Thing of that kind. If we may presume  
 “ to speak to God in Prayer, as we would to  
 “ Men in a Dispute, in one Part of the Service,  
 “ we



“ we may as well do it in all. Or if one Part  
“ be suffered to be unintelligible to the Bulk of  
“ the People, why not another Part ?” — I leave  
it to them to give an Answer to this.

There is another Passage, which plainly shews,  
how unwilling our Authors are, for the sake of  
*Orthodoxy*, to give up any Part of the Liturgy,  
though ever so unintelligible, or improper in our  
solemn Addresses to God; though they lay it  
down for a Rule, “ That divine Offices should  
“ be free from all Matters of doubtful Disputa-  
“ tion.”

Speaking of the *Litany*, they make this Obser-  
vation upon it.—“ The *Exordium* shall be passed  
“ over, though something might justly enough  
“ be said, in favour of the *Simplicity* of Adora-  
“ tion; and avoiding every Part of Controversy,  
“ and every scholastic Distinction, and term of  
“ Art, in our solemn Addresses to Heaven.”  
*Ibid.* 324.

One would think, it should be a sufficient Rea-  
son, not to pass over the *Exordium*; if, as they  
confess, it contains Things not fit to be offered up  
in our solemn Addresses to Heaven. This is to  
express a great Zeal for the Honour of God, and  
at the same Time to shew the greatest Indifference.  
It is to be hoped these Things will be explained  
in the *Second Part of Disquisitions*, which they have  
promised the Public.

*Something*



*Something* our Authors would ſay here, but — *Something* forbids it. May I be permitted to gueſs at it? Is it not this, That they think it too much reſembles the praying to *Three Gods*, when we diſtinctly and ſeparately call upon three Perſons, or three Gods, — “O God the Father of Heaven, have mercy upon us. — O God the Son, have mercy upon us. — O God the Holy Ghoſt, have mercy upon us.” And that it is not poſſible but the Bulk of Chriſtians muſt think thus of it?

And what is that *Simplicity* of Worſhip, which our Authors here hint at, but deſire to be excuſed ſpeaking out? Is it not plainly this, That Reaſon and Chriſtianity both direct, that all Prayer ſhould be offered up to God, even the Father, in the Name and through the Mediation of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, for the Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit?

I here call upon them to ſhew any other *Simplicity* of Worſhip, or indeed any other that is or can be intelligible to the Generality of Chriſtians. — And yet, when I laid this Point, this *Simplicity* of Worſhip before them, in the Remarks I ſent them; — “then truly they did not ſuppoſe I had ſufficiently proved that Point.”

What a *Farce* is it, — to hear Men call, in the moſt earneſt and ſolemn Manner, upon our Governors, both in Church and State, beſeeching them, for the Honour of God, and of our holy Religion, and for the Sake of the Bulk of Chriſtians,

tians, that they may not believe and worship they know not how nor what; that our Liturgy may be reviewed and amended; and they either are not agreed among themselves, or do not choose to speak out, what it is they would have amended?

So much for that Part of our Liturgy, *Prayer*; which our Authors are content should be left, just as it is, with respect to its being unintelligible; though they must own, the Amendment or Alteration of this is of much more Importance, than the shortning the Service, or the leaving out the Repetitions of the same Things, if they were ten times as many.

I come now to consider that Part of the Liturgy, the *Creeds*.

And first, as to the *Atbanasian Creed*, our Authors think it would be better, if it were not read in our Churches. And the Reasons they give for it are unanswerable, viz. "That it has been the  
" Occasion of so much unchristian Altercation in  
" almost every Part of Christendom;—and, that  
" very few (they might have said none) have any  
" Notion of what they are reading."

But they humbly hope, "it may retain its Place  
" quietly and unmolested in our Common Prayer  
" Book." What their Reason can be for this is hard to conceive; unless it be, that they hope a Time may come for the Reading of it again.

For

For if it be true, that it has been the Occasion of the most shameful and unchristian Disputes; and that it is utterly unintelligible, not to the common People only, but to the most Learned; as is plain from hence, that no two thinking Men ever agreed in the same Sense of it;—If these Things are true, methinks it must be a Disgrace to our Common Prayer Book; and a Reproach to Protestants, who profess to make the Scripture the only Rule of their Faith; to allow it a *Place* in our Service-Book. It ought rather to have a *Public Censure* passed upon it.

But so unwilling are our Authors to part with this *favourite* Creed, that they make the following Proposal.—“ May not some middle Way be  
“ found out, which shall accommodate the Dif-  
“ ference between serious People, (I think they  
“ might have said between *Us* and the *Church of*  
“ *Rome*) and yet retain the *Substance* of the *Atha-*  
“ *nasian Doctrine*?” Page 102.

If we are to retain the *Substance* of it in a *New Creed*, methinks we may as well, nay much better, retain the *Old Athanasian Creed*. For must not this give Occasion for fresh Disputes? or will it be more intelligible?

It is very surprizing, how Men of Peace and Piety can talk in this loose and inconsistent Manner.

But

But let us examine this New Creed, so far as it contains, what they call,—“ the great Essentials of our Catholic Christianity ;” —or, in other Words, so much of the Substance of it, as is utterly unintelligible.

The First Article is, — “ That we believe in  
“ the Father, who created us ; in the Son who  
“ redeemed us ; and in the Holy Ghost, who  
“ sanctifies us. And, that by the Confession of  
“ a true Faith, acknowledging the incomprehen-  
“ sible Excellence of the most glorious and ever-  
“ blessed Trinity, we do with an humble and  
“ sincere Mind worship the Unity.”

Now I suppose it will be granted, that all Men are capable of understanding, what it is to believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And, that they are as capable of understanding, what is the necessary Consequence of such Belief, that we offer up all Prayer to the Father, in the Name of his Son, for the Assistance of his Holy Spirit.

These, if I understand any thing in my Bible, are the great Essentials of Christianity taught therein. I do not choose to call it *Catholic* Christianity, as that Word has been so much abused by Protestants as well as Papists.

But what is meant, — “ by worshiping the  
“ Unity,” I believe no Man, not the most Wise  
and



and Learned understand, for this plain Reason; that it is downright *Jargon*.

But our Authors tell us in a Note below,—  
 “The other Expression, that is in the old *Athanasian Creed*, of worshiping the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, being more obscure, and thought by many to be scarce intelligible; it was judged proper to alter it as above, for that of worshiping the Unity.”

And can they really think, that the one is obscure and scarce intelligible, and that the other is not the same?

Had they said, We are to believe in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to offer up Prayer distinctly to each of them, this had been intelligible, and conformable to their Faith: But to say, We are to believe in the Three Divine Persons, and to worship the Unity, is to *affect* to talk unintelligibly, because they don't *choose* to speak out.

The Third Article of this New Creed is,—  
 “That, in our *Nature*, Christ suffered and died for us.”

That Christ, or the only begotten Son of God, did, in Obedience to the Will of God his Father, and by his own voluntary Consent, condescend to leave that Glory which He had with God, and to be

be born of a Woman; and by that means to be united to a human Body, that he might be capable to reveal the Will of God to sinful Men, and to lay down his Life a Ransom and a Sacrifice for them, to reconcile them to God, and to make them worthy of eternal Happiness;—this is the plain Doctrine of the New Testament, and is what all Men may easily understand.

But if by Christ's Suffering and Dying in our Nature be meant,—That he was united to a human Soul and Body, and that by Virtue of this Union he partook of the Sufferings of the human Soul;—this is utterly unintelligible, and impossible to be reconciled with the Scripture Doctrine of the Redemption of Man. For the Scripture every where speaks of Christ as *one* Person, viz. the only-begotten Son of God, who, *Himself*, in his own Person, humbled himself, was incarnate, and suffered.

These are the only unintelligible Articles in this Creed, and it must be confessed, they retain the Substance of the *Athanasian Creed*; and for that Reason is so far from being “a middle Way to accommodate the Difference between serious People,”—that it is no Composition or middle Way at all, but obliging Men to profess their Faith in the same *unintelligible* Manner as in the *Athanasian Creed*. It is indeed giving up a long Gingle of Words, which the *Athanasians* won't be pleased

pleased with, and which no sincere Christian will thank them for.

The Conclusion of this New Creed is, *viz.*  
 “ Finally, that he who believeth these Things,  
 “ and is baptized into this Faith, shall be saved;  
 “ and that he who believeth not shall be con-  
 “ demned.”

How this Sentence of pronouncing all those *Damned* who do not believe this Creed, differs in the least from those *Damnatory Clauses* in the *Athanasian Creed*, for not believing the same Doctrine, is, I think, incumbent upon our Authors to make appear. And how they can assert such a Clause in their Creed, after what they have said and quoted from other Writers concerning the same Clauses in the *Athanasian Creed*, is not easily to be accounted for. See Page 318, &c.

Before I leave this Subject, it is fit I take Notice of one further Remark which our Authors make concerning the Doctrine of the Trinity.

The great Doctrine of the Trinity (they tell us) was never designed for Controversy; and being (as this Creed justly confesses it to be) a Subject above the Reach of human Comprehension, it must, for that very Reason, be a Subject very unmeet for Disputation among frail and fallible Men. *Ibid.* Page 309.

How

How ridiculous is it to quote this Creed for a Proof of this, when they confess, "That it has been the Occasion of the most *unchristian Altercation* in almost every Part of Christendom." But their Meaning, I suppose, is, That if Men would but acquiesce in the *Explanation* which this Creed gives of the Doctrine of the Trinity, there need be no Dispute about it.

But is it not true concerning every other Doctrine of the Gospel, "That they were never designed for Controversy?" Christianity was intended to put an End to all Disputes about Religion.

To instance in one Doctrine, The Doctrine of a future State of Rewards and Punishments. No Man who believes the Scripture can doubt of the Truth of this.

The Scripture declares, that *Life and Immortality is brought to Light through the Gospel*. This is a plain and positive Declaration of a future State of Rewards: And no Man who believes the Scripture can doubt the Truth of it.

But when the Scripture declares farther, That this Reward is *such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive*;—must it not be the greatest Folly and Presumption in Men to dispute about the Nature



of this Reward? All that the Scripture intends, is to fet forth the Greatnefs of the Reward, to encourage Men to lead holy Lives.

So far as the Scripture has revealed concerning any Doctrine, fo far it is eafy to be underftood by all Men. But what is not revealed, the wifeft Man can know nothing of; and therefore it is great Prefumption in any Man to difpute about it.

This is the *Distinction* that ought to be made concerning any Doctrine which is not particularly defined in Scripture.

To apply this to the Doctrine of the Trinity. — Reason, as well as Revelation, tells us, that there is one God, one fupreme Caufe and Original of Things, who is the alone Author of all Being, and the Fountain of all Power.

This one God is, in the New Testament, emphatically ftiled, The Father.

BUT farther. The New Testament is a Revelation of Two Divine Perfons, called, The Son, and the Holy Spirit of God. The firft is emphatically ftiled, The only begotten Son of God; the other is faid to *proceed* from the Father.

By

By this Description of them, they are plainly *distinguished* from each other, and from all other Beings, who are said to be created.

By this their great Dignity is plainly pointed out to us. But if any Man will presume to explain, of how great Dignity they are, or how the Son is begotten of the Father, or how the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, he disputes about what he can know nothing of, because the Scripture has not defined or revealed it.

*God, says our blessed Saviour, so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* This is spoken to shew the amazing Love of God to Man: And this is sufficient to all the Ends and Purposes of Religion. But if any Man will dispute how great this Love of God was, that is, of how great Dignity the Person was who was given by God for the Redemption of Man, he disputes about that which he can know nothing of.

In this Sense, and no other, the Doctrine of the Trinity is above our Comprehension; or in other Words, what the metaphysical Nature, Essence, or Substance, of the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit is: Of this we can have no Idea, because the Scripture has not defined it.

But to speak in *general* of the Doctrine of the Trinity,—“ That it is a Subject above the Reach “ of human Comprehension,”—is as absurd as to say, That the Doctrine of the Resurrection, or of a future State, is above our Comprehension.

Nor can any Thing possibly be more ridiculous, than to hear Men say, “ That the great Doctrine “ of the Trinity was never designed for Contro- “ verfy,”—and yet argue for a Creed, the Whole of which is Controversial, and nothing else.

If this be the Use our Authors make of their Quotations from some eminent Writers concerning the *Athanasian Creed*, it is directly contrary to the Use those Writers *intended*.

The third and last Point, I proposed to consider, was the Object of Prayer, or what is that Form or Manner in which Christians ought to pray.

This, one would think, should have been the *principal* Thing, which our Authors ought to have explained. For this is the essential Point in Prayer. Accordingly, God gave this Command to the *Jews*,—“ Thou shalt have none other Gods be- “ fore me.”—And when the Devil would have prevailed with our Saviour to fall down and worship him, his Answer was ; — *It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou*

*thou serve*; — plainly intimating, that this was written not for the *Jews* only, but for all *others* to the End of the World.

But as Christianity is a Revelation of two divine Persons, called the Son, and the Holy Spirit of God; and as God sent his Son into the World to publish a new Covenant with Man, and to lay down his Life a Ransom and a Sacrifice for sinful Men, to reconcile them to God, and to make them worthy of eternal Happiness; and since, for this his Obedience to the Will of God his Father, he is exalted to his right Hand, to be our Mediator, and will be our Judge at the last Day; and as the Holy Spirit is likewise sent by God into the World, in an invisible manner, to be the Sanctifier of all Hearts, and the Comforter and Supporter of good Christians under all their Difficulties; it is reasonable to expect that Christ has given some *new* Commandment, in what Manner all, who believe in him, ought to pray, different from what was required of the *Jews*.

This the Reason of the Thing plainly speaks; and, if we search the Scripture, we shall find it to be so.

When his Disciples asked him to teach them to pray, as *John* taught his Disciples, he gave them that Form of Prayer, commonly called, *The Lord's Prayer*. Here is no Alteration of Worship  
C 3 commanded,



commanded, but they were to offer up their Prayer to God, even the Father, as the *Jews* did.

After this, we do not find that our Saviour gave his Disciples any other Instructions concerning Prayer, till a little before he suffered, in his last Discourse with them. He then resumes the Subject of Prayer, plainly telling them, how they should pray, when he left them, and returned to the Father. — *In that Day, (says he) ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name; ask, and ye shall receive. At that Day ye shall ask in my Name.*

Here is plainly a *new* Commandment given by our Lord to his Disciples, viz. “That when he left them, they were to pray to the Father in his Name.” — *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my Name.* — He does not say, Hitherto ye have offered up all Prayer to the Father, but when I leave you, then ye shall offer up Prayer to me likewise. This he most certainly would have done, had he intended to instruct them, that they should offer up Prayer to Him, as well as to the Father.

It cannot be denied, that our Saviour was here giving full Directions to his Disciples, how they were to pray, when he left them, and returned to the Father. And can it be supposed, that he should give them this new Commandment, To  
pray

pray to the Father in his Name; and that, if they were likewise to pray to himself, he should not plainly tell them so? Instead of doing this, as he certainly knew, that in After-Ages Men would offer up Prayer to him, therefore in order to prevent it, and to be a Warning to all Christians in future Times, he expressly *forbids* them to offer up any Prayer to him; — *In that Day, (says he) ye shall ask me nothing.*

This is no forced or unnatural Comment upon this Discourse of our Saviour to his Disciples, but the plain, easy, and necessary Sense and Explanation of it. Though in Truth it needs no Explanation, nor is the Sense of it, as a positive Institution, how Christians ought to pray, possibly to be evaded, *viz.* That they were to offer up all Prayer to God, even the Father, in his Name.

And when our Authors think to justify their Conduct in refusing to answer to this, alledging, “ that it is no *Part* of their general Plan, and that “ they are not *competent* Judges of the Sense of “ our Saviour’s Words, &c.” — they only expose themselves to the Scorn and Derision of Infidels, and of Papists, and prejudice all serious Christians against their Undertaking.

But though our Saviour’s Directions can alone determine, how Christians are to pray; yet if we choose to be determined by the Reason of the Thing, (and our Authors say very justly, —

“ That Reason and Chriftianity always coincide.”  
*Preface*, Page 16.) Reason demonstrates, that all  
 Prayer ought to be offered up to God, even the  
 Father.

The very *Office* of a Mediator neceffarily im-  
 plies, that He is not the Perfon to be invoked ;  
 but that we are to pray to that Perfon, with whom  
 he is our Mediator.

Who is it that pardons our Sins ? Is it not  
 God ? And upon what Conditions will He do  
 this ? Is it not for the Sake of his Son, for his  
 laying down his Life, and upon his Interceffion,  
 and upon our fincere Repentance ? Ought not  
 all Prayer then to be offered up to God in the  
 Name of his Son ?

Befides, if we pray to more Perfons than One,  
 fhall we not be *perplexed* in our Minds, to which  
 we ought to pray moft *frequently*, and with the  
 greateft *Fervency* ?

This will certainly be found to be true by all  
 confiderate Perfons ; and is an unanswerable Ar-  
 gument againft more Objects of Prayer than one  
 only.

But the offering up Prayer to Chrift is not the  
 only Difficulty to get over. According to our  
 Authors Principles, Prayer ought likewise to be  
 offered up to the Holy Spirit ; and they may as  
 well fay, with the Church of *Rome*, that we are  
 justified

justified in praying to the *Virgin Mary*, and to *Saints* and *Angels*.

The Scripture expressly declares, that *God has sent his Holy Spirit to be the Sanctifier of all Hearts*. And of the holy Angels it is said, that they are *all ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*.

This is a sufficient Reason that we should pray to God to give us the Assistance of his Holy Spirit, and that his Angels may minister to us: But this will not justify our praying to either. Nothing less than an express Command can justify our doing of it.

Hence it is, I think, undeniable, that both Reason and Scripture require that all Prayer be offered up to God, even the Father.

It is that Glory which God hath declared, that he will not give to any other Person. *Invocation* is the *peculiar* Honour due to the Father, as *Mediation* is the *peculiar* Honour due to the Son, and *Sanctification* the *peculiar* Honour due to the Holy Spirit. And we may as well set up more Mediators than the Son, as the Papists have done; and more Sanctifiers, than the Holy Spirit; as more Objects of Prayer or Invocation, than the Father.

The Simplicity of the Christian Worship consists in this, and this alone, and I defy our Authors to shew any other.

But



But because Example may weigh more than Precept with some, let us enquire, What was the Practice of the Apostles, and the first Christians.

To be satisfied of this, we need no farther Proof, than the Epistles of St Paul, which give the following Directions concerning Prayer.

*Seeing then, that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the Heavens, Jesus the Son of God, —let us therefore come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain Mercy. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, who come—unto God,—by him; seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them. By him therefore let us offer the Sacrifice of Praise to God continually.*

There is not the least *Intimation* throughout all the Epistles of St Paul, or of the other Apostles, that Christians in those Days offered up Prayer to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit.

*I bow my Knees* (says that great Apostle) *to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* — But we nowhere find, that he bowed his Knees (except in one Instance) to our Lord Jesus Christ; which he of all the Apostles would not have omitted to do, had he not known, that all Prayer was to be offered up to the Father.

And now I appeal to every sincere Christian, that is, to such as are not ashamed of our Blessed Saviour,

Saviour, and of his Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation;—Whether I have not clearly proved from Scripture, that all Prayer ought to be offered up to God, even the Father, in the alone Name and Mediation of his Son Jesus Christ;—and, whether the Authors of *Disquisitions* ought not to have made this the *Foundation* of their *Plan*.

It will perhaps be expected, that I should take notice of those Texts of Scripture, which have been urged, as containing Precepts or Examples of offering up Prayer to Christ; though no Texts of obscure or doubtful Signification, can invalidate those that are clear and express; only to shew, how Men will rest and torture the Scripture to support a *favourite and sinking Hypothesis*; rather than give up a Point, which they are conscious they cannot defend.

The first Text that is brought to prove, that Prayer is commanded to be offered up to the Son, is this;—*That all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*.—Nothing can be more forced, than to apply this to Prayer. *The Father* (says our Saviour) *hath committed all Judgement to the Son, that all Men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father; he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father who hath sent him*.—The Reasons here given for honouring the Son, are,—*That the Father hath given all Judgement to him, and that he hath sent him*.—Whoso-  
ever

ever therefore does not honour the Son, as having all Judgement committed to him, and being sent by the Father, honoureth not the Father. — And what is this Honour, that they are to pay to the Son? The offering up Prayer to him? The Words cannot possibly bear any such Sense. They are to believe and obey him, as being thus honoured by the Father, and sent by him. The Words, *even as*, do not mean that Men are in all Things to pay the same Honour to the Son, as to the Father; nor have they respect to any particular Honour; but as they honour the Father, as being God; so they should honour the Son, as being sent by him.

Again; *Thou, Lord, who knowest the Hearts of all Men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.* It is *ambiguous*, whether these Words are directed to Christ, or to God the Father, but supposing them to be directed to Christ, as it was upon that particular Occasion, to fill up the Number of his own Apostles, no Argument can be drawn from them for praying to him upon all *other* Occasions.

Again; *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.* What relation has this to offering up Prayer to Christ? St *Stephen* saw the Heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right Hand of God, just as he was going to be put to Death for professing to believe in him; upon which he calls upon him to receive his Spirit: Was it not natural that he should do this? Is this any Proof that it was his *constant* Practice to pray to Christ? or can any  
Argu-

Argument be drawn from it, that Christians ought to pray to Him? Arguments must run very *low* indeed, when such as these are urged, for offering up Prayer to Christ.

Again; All those Texts which only express the Wishes of the Person who speaks, viz. *The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you, &c.* are not, properly speaking, Prayer offered up to Christ; nor are they directed to Christ, as they would be, if it were said, — *Thy Grace, O Lord Jesus Christ, be with us all.*

Again; *For this Thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.* — Though the Words are ambiguous, it seems rather to be understood of Christ. But though the Apostle might upon some *particular* Occasion call on Christ, is this any Proof that he *constantly* prayed to him; or that Christians ought to offer up Prayer to him, who have no such *particular* Reason for doing of it?

In the *Revelations*, the Angels are represented as falling down before the Lamb, and saying, *Thou art worthy,—for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood.*—But is what the Angels do in Heaven, who are *present* with Christ, any Example for us to do the same on Earth?

But the proper Question is, Do any or all of these Texts, contain any Command for Christians to pray to Christ? or can any Thing but an express



press Command justify our doing of it? or is it possible to believe, that, if it were our Duty to pray to Christ, he would not as *plainly* have told his Disciples so, as he did, that they should pray to the Father in his Name?

When I laid these Things before our Authors, I expected, that in order to *evade* this plain *Prohibition* of our Saviour's, viz. *In that Day ye shall ask me nothing*,—they would have made use of that *senseless* Distinction,—That our Saviour speaks this with respect to his Human Nature only; but with respect to his Divine Nature, we are to pray to him the same as to the Father.

This Distinction serves them, in a similar Case, when they would get rid of that Difficulty of our Saviour's being Inferior to the Father, as he himself expressly declares,—*My Father is greater than I*;—which *Orthodoxy* tells us is to be understood, as spoken of his *Human Nature*, and not of his *Divine*.

I am not ignorant, that the more general Way of solving this Difficulty, viz. “How it happens that Christ directed his Disciples to pray to the Father, and says nothing of their praying to him, if he really intended that they should offer up Prayer to him,”—is this, “That when we pray to the Father, in the Lord's Prayer, and in all our other Prayers, we are to understand by the Word Father, the whole Trinity.”

That

That this Opinion generally prevailed in the Reign of *James I.* cannot be doubted. For in a Tract of that learned Monarch, entitled, *Meditations on the Lord's Prayer*, he says, — “ I doubt  
“ not, but that under the Name of Father, in  
“ this Prayer, all the Trinity is to be understood.” It is plain from hence, this must have been the current Doctrine at that Time.

And that this is the Orthodox Doctrine of these Days, cannot I think be denied, from the following Instances, not to cite many more.

Dr *Bisse*, in his *Beauty of Holiness*, (as he calls it) has this Observation ; — “ As to the Object of  
“ our Worship, the Church seems to intimate,  
“ that the Lord's Prayer, and by consequence all  
“ our other Prayers, of which this ought to be  
“ the Pattern, is to be directed to the Trinity ;  
“ and that by the Word Father, in the Preface  
“ of it, not the first Person *alone*, but the other  
“ two are *equally* included ; for we pray not, saying, *The Father*, but *Our Father*.” *Sermon III.*

These Sermons were preached before a learned Audience, and have gone through several Editions ; and I never heard, that the Doctor incurred any Censure for his Opinion ; so that we may conclude, it was the current Doctrine in his Time.

But to come down later. Dr *Wells*, in the Controversy with Dr *Clarke*, concerning the Trinity, recommends a Writer, in the same Controversy, for asserting the same Doctrine,

And

And a Divine, who seems to have made it his Business to collect every Thing material upon the Subject, gives this as a short Abstract of what several of our learned Writers have said upon it.—  
 “ The Church (says he, referring to great Authorities) always prays to the Trinity, to the Trinity in Unity, or to the Unity in Trinity.  
 “ The Word Father is not intended *notionaliter*,  
 “ and *personaliter*, but *essentialiter*, as it is referred unto the Creature, made and conserved by  
 “ God, in which Sense it appertains to the whole  
 “ Trinity.”

And among the Primitive Fathers, those able Expounders of Scripture, *Tertullian* says,—“ *In Patre Filius invocatur.*”—He indeed so far differs from modern Orthodoxy, that he only comprehends the Son, under the Name of Father, in the Lord's Prayer.

If this were true, it would follow, That when Christ prayed to his Father, he prayed to himself.—And when St *John* says, that Christ is our Advocate with the Father, he means, that the Son is an Advocate to himself:—with many other such Absurdities, as not only *Tertullian's* Authority, and the whole *Catholic Church* from the Days of the Apostles, but even that of an *Angel* from Heaven, would be very insufficient to establish in the Opinion of any reasonable Man, who had ever read the New Testament.

And

And will our Authors, after this, *persist* in it,  
“That it was no *Part* of their *general Plan*,  
“to enquire, what is the proper *Object* of Wor-  
“ship; or in what *manner* Christians ought to  
“pray.”

It is the *first* and *principal* Thing to be enquired  
into, in the Review of any Liturgy, *viz.* Are all  
the Prayers directed to a *proper Object*?—For tho’  
a Liturgy be free from all vain Repetitions,—  
from every Thing that is unintelligible,—from all  
Scholastic Terms,—and from every Controversial  
Point;—yet if all, or any of the Prayers are of-  
fered up to improper Objects, that Liturgy can-  
not be justified, or be acceptable to God.

But it is to be hoped our Authors have, since  
the publishing the first Volume of their Disquifi-  
tions, seen their *Error*, and will *correct* it in the  
second Volume, which they have promised the  
Public.

There is a remarkable Passage in a Letter of  
the learned Bishop *Bull* to the Bishop of *Meaux*,  
which it is proper to lay before the Reader.

“In the first and best Ages, (saith that learned  
“Bishop) the Churches of Christ directed all their  
“Prayers,—*according to the Scripture*,—to God  
“the Father only, through the alone Mediation  
“of Jesus Christ.” Page 295.



I suppose, no one will dispute the Truth of the Fact with this great Master of Antiquity. But if the Bishop was mistaken, he gives a stronger Reason why the Prayers of the Church, in these Days, ought to be the same, viz. “*That it was according to the Scriptures.*”

When the good Bishop is pressed by the Church of Rome; — “How Protestants can *object* to the offering up Prayer to the *Blessed Virgin*, and to *Saints* and *Angels*; when, at the same Time, they offer up Prayer to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, for which there is no *Command* in *Scripture* ;” — his Answer is, “That in the first and best Ages, all Prayer was offered up to God, even the Father.”

But when he would defend that *favourite* Point against Heretics, as they are called, “That the Son and Holy Spirit, are God equal with the Father ;” — then Reason and the Scripture are put to the *Torture* to justify the offering up Prayer to the Son and Holy Spirit; because if that Point be gained, it follows, that the Son and Holy Spirit must be God equal with the Father.

I make no doubt but our Authors, like the Rest of the Orthodox, have the highest Veneration for Primitive Antiquity. Let them then give a Reason, why we are not to follow Antiquity, the Practice of the first and best Ages, in offering up Prayer to God the Father only.

There

There are Objections to other Parts of the Liturgy, which our Authors either pass over; or the Answers they give to them, are not, I think, at all satisfactory.

The first I shall mention, is the *Observation of Days*.

It must be confessed, that this Practice is very Antient; but that is by no Means a sufficient Reason for it.

Let us hear what a Person of great Piety says upon this Occasion; I mean Mr *Nelson*, in his *Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church*.

In his Preliminary Instructions, Page 5, he puts this Query:—“ Is not the Church of *England*’s symbolizing with the Church of *Rome* in hallowing of Days, an Objection against the Observation of them?”

To this he Answers:—“ I apprehend it is not. Because Conformity to any Church, in such Institutions as tend to promote Piety, and are agreeable to Scripture, and Primitive Antiquity, no way deserves Censure. Neither is the Church of *Rome* blameable for hallowing of Days, but for grafting upon them such erroneous and superstitious Practices, as are unknown to Scripture, and to the purest Ages of the Church.”

If this good Man is for conforming to the Practice of the purest Ages of the Church in the hallowing of Days; how much more ought he to be for conforming to the Practice of the purest Ages in the solemn Point of Prayer?—But how strangely will the best of Men sometimes *forget* themselves!

Now if it be allowed, “That the hallowing of Days may tend to *promote* Piety;” yet when it plainly tends to the introducing of the grossest *Idolatry*, and has actually been abused to this Purpose, were it not to be wished, that this Practice had never been introduced into the Church? and is it not an unanswerable Reason for the taking of it away?

Especially if it be true, what this Writer says; —“That the antient Churches were obliged to abolish even some *Apostolical Rites*, viz. the *Agapæ*, and the *Kiss of Charity*, through Mens obstinate Abuse of them.”

And surely no Man will deny, that if the hallowing of Days were laid aside in the Church of *Rome*, their idolatrous Worship would soon cease. But whilst Protestants *countenance* them in this Practice, of *hallowing* of Days, they must never expect or hope to make them lay aside their praying to those Persons, whose Lives they hallow in this manner.

And

And whilst this Practice of hallowing Days is observed by Protestants, they can't be certain, that it may not be the Means, at one Time or other, of our returning to the Church of *Rome*.

For it can't be supposed, nor is it true, that Christians, *all at once*, practised that idolatrous Worship of offering up Prayer to the *Blessed Virgin*, and to *Saints* and *Angels*. No; they were led into it by *Degrees*. And had they never *hallowed* Days in Commemoration of them, they had never *prayed* to them.

Our Authors take no notice at all of this. But next to the Offering up of Prayer to God, even the Father, only; I think no *other* Alteration in the Liturgy of that Consequence, as the laying aside the Practice of hallowing Days, in Commemoration of the Apostles and other good Men.

And our Authors, one would think, should readily come into this, when they are not afraid or ashamed, (for which they greatly deserve to be *commended*) to declare their Apprehensions,—“that  
“ a Time may come, when we may be reconciled,  
“ and return to the Church of *Rome*.”

Speaking of the *Dissenters*, they say; —“ It is  
“ the Opinion of the Authors, —as *Things now*  
“ *stand*,—that it is better there should be Dissen-  
“ ters, than that there should be none.—We have  
“ the greatest Reason to pray, that the Separation  
D 3 “ may



“ may be continued, since they are now a Check  
 “ upon us. Were the Check once removed, ei-  
 “ ther by a total Coalition, or Suppression, who  
 “ knows what a favourable Aspect we might cast  
 “ again towards *Rome*, and what an Inclination  
 “ we might shew towards a Reunion with her ?”  
*Appeal to Common Reason, &c. Part II. Page 66.*

This is *honestly* and *wisely* said. — For, “ as  
 “ *Things now stand;*” — that is, whilst we retain  
 in our Liturgy Things that either cannot be justified,  
 or at the best are not necessary, we give the Emis-  
 saries of the Church of *Rome* a fair Opportunity,  
 to make Converts to that Church, by persuading weak  
 People, that there is no *essential* Difference between  
 the Church of *Rome*, and our own Church.

And it is certain, that by these Arts they do  
 seduce many to their Communion ; and I wish I  
 could say, it is only among the lowest of the  
 People.

I can't but add here one Word of Advice to our  
*Dissenters* ; — That it is greatly to be wished, that  
 as they are reformed from all the *ceremonious* and  
*superstitious* Worship of the Church of *Rome* ; so  
 they returned to the Worship of one God, even  
 the Father, only ; — and that they departed from  
 that *Enthusiastic Notion* of praying by the *Spirit* ;  
 — and that they required no more of any Man,  
 than this, — To believe the Scripture to be the  
 Word of God, to endeavour to find out the true  
 Sense

Sense of it, and to live according to it. Or, if they like it better, in the Words of that excellent Man, Dr *Foster*, “ That they would publicly acknowledge, that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, and endeavours to understand the Revelation which he brought from Heaven, and to act agreeably to it, is a good Christian, and is intitled to the Charity and Fellowship of Christians, whatever other Mistakes he may be guilty of.” *Discourses on Natural Religion, &c.* Page 337.

If our *Dissenters* made this *farther* Reformation, in their Faith and Worship, they would be the Glory of the Reformation, and an Example of pure and genuine Christianity; and a Bulwark against Popery, not to be shaken.

But to return to the Liturgy, and our Authors *Disquisitions* upon it.

In the Communion Office, there are several Things that ought to be altered, which our Authors take no notice of.

Bishop *Bull*, in his Letter to the Bishop of *Meaux*, says; —“ We are not ignorant, that the Antient Fathers generally teach, that the Bread and Wine in the Eucharist, by or upon the Consecration of them, do become and are made the Body and Blood of Christ.” Page 250.— And I am firmly persuaded, that a great Number of Protestants believe the same. For this Reason,

and not to give countenance to that absurd Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, it were to be wished, that we did not retain that Practice of the Church of *Rome* of *consecrating* the Elements. Nor can it be denied, that this superstitious Practice laid the Foundation for that absurd Doctrine. Let any Man shew, that the Sacrament cannot be administered with as much *Decency* and *Piety*, if this Ceremony were omitted, and that will be some Reason for the Continuance of it.

Bishop *Bull* observes farther, Page 303; —  
 “ That the whole Administration of the Sacra-  
 “ ment is so clogged, so metamorphosed, and  
 “ defaced, by the Addition of a Multitude of  
 “ Ceremonies, and those some of them more be-  
 “ coming the Stage, than the Table of our Lord,  
 “ that if the blessed Apostles were alive, and pre-  
 “ sent at the Celebration of the *Mass* in the *Ro-*  
 “ *man* Church, they would be amazed, and won-  
 “ der what the Meaning of it was; sure I am,  
 “ they would never own it to be the same Ordi-  
 “ nance, which they left to the Churches.”

Tho' I am far from thinking, that the Ceremonies used in the Administration of the Sacrament in the Church of *England*, deserve that Character which Bishop *Bull* here gives of the Ceremonies used in the Church of *Rome* in that Office; yet I can't but say, that the Manner of administering the Sacrament in the Church of *England* is so different from that *plain, simple* manner, in which  
 it

it was administered by the Apostles, that were they alive and present at it, they would not own it to be the same Ordinance, which they left to the Churches.

When this Sacrament was introduced into, and made a Part of the Public Worship, is not, I believe, easy to determine. Most certainly, not in the Time of the Apostles. This alone would perplex the Apostles, or the first Christians, who never saw it administered in that Manner, what the Christians in these Days intended; especially, when they saw the different Postures used by the Minister,—“ of standing up, and kneeling down, “ — then turning to the People, — then to the “ Table;” and the Ceremonies he uses whilst he reads the Prayer of Consecration,—“ of taking the Patten into his Hands,—then to break “ the Bread, — then to lay his Hand upon all “ the Bread, — then to take the Cup into his “ Hand,—then to lay his Hand upon every Vessel, be it Chalice or Flaggon, in which there “ is any Wine to be consecrated;—and when all “ have communicated, then he is to return to “ the Table, and reverently place upon it what “ remains of the consecrated Elements, covering “ the same with a fair Linnen Cloth.”

Can any Man believe, if the Apostles were alive and to be present at this, that they would not be perplexed to know what was doing; or that it would at first Sight enter into their Thoughts,



Thoughts, that this was the same Ordinance which they left to the Church.

Let no Man think, that I am against receiving this Sacrament at the same Time when Christians are assembled together to worship God in public. No, I am satisfied it would not be received in that decent and devout Manner, as it ought to be, did Christians assemble together to receive it at any other Time or Place. What I could wish is, that this Sacrament were administered with as little Ceremony as possible, and not in such manner as to give the People false and superstitious Notions of it.

For these Reasons I think the *Dissenters* have acted wisely, and as becomes consistent Protestants, and sincere Christians, in laying aside all those *Ceremonies* practised by our Church, and administering the Sacrament in the most *plain* and *simple* Manner; neither to *confound* the Understanding of the Bulk of Christians, nor to give any Occasion to the Church of *Rome* to say, that their Form of Administration differs nothing, *in reality*, from their Manner of administering it.

In the same Letter, Bishop *Bull* says farther; —“ I might pass from the holy Eucharist to the  
“ other Sacrament of Baptism, and expose the  
“ many strange Ceremonies used in the *Roman*  
“ *Church*, in the Consecration of the Font, and  
“ in the very Administration of that Sacrament.”

Now though the Church of *England* has reformed from the most ridiculous of these Ceremonies; yet she has retained one, that is unworthy of the Simplicity and Purity of Christianity, I mean the *Sign of the Cross*.

Our Authors speak contemptibly enough of this Ceremony, and yet they are for retaining of it; “only that Parents should have it in their own Choice, whether their Child shall be signed with the Sign of the Cross, or not.”

“Although (say they) we do not think the Sign of the Cross or any other Ceremony, that is in itself *harmless*, can deserve two Words debate; yet, for Peace sake, they humbly query, Whether this Signature might not be omitted, if the Parents desire it.”

So that, in the Opinion of these Gentlemen, it does not deserve two Words *debate*, what Number of Ceremonies the Worship of God be clogged with, “provided they are in themselves *harmless*.”

But as harmless as our Authors would represent this Sign to be; yet if it be in itself *ridiculous*, and has been the Occasion of the most superstitious Use of it in the Church of *Rome*, both the Priest and the People signing themselves with the Sign of the Cross in their Addresses to Heaven, and placing a *Merit* in it; surely it ought to be laid aside by all Protestants who disclaim any Merit

in

in the Uſe of that Sign, or of any other, to obtain Pardon for their Sins.

What has not a little contributed to this fooliſh and ſuperſtitious Veneration for the Sign of the Croſs, has been the Stories that have been related by the Primitive Fathers, and other antient Writers, concerning the Sign of the Croſs appearing in various Forms, and at different Times, in the Heavens, and upon the Cloaths and Bodies of Men.

The learned Mr *Warburton* has given us a Collection of theſe in his *Julian*. But there is one, of a more modern Date, related by this learned Divine; “ which (he ſays) is as well attested as “ a Fact can poſſibly be; ” — I truſt he does not mean as the miraculous Facts, recorded in the Goſpel.

I ſhall ſet the Story down at full length, and leave every Man to give *Credit* to, or to *laugh* at it, as he ſhall be *diſpoſed*.

“ This Day the Lord Biſhop of *Ely*, a Prelate  
 “ of great Piety and Holineſs, related to me a  
 “ wonderful Thing. He ſaid, he had received  
 “ the Account from many Hands, but chiefly  
 “ from the Lord Biſhop of *Wells*, lately dead;  
 “ who was ſucceeded by the Lord *Montacute*;  
 “ That in the City of *Wells*, about fifteen Years  
 “ ago, one Summer’s Day, while the People were  
 “ at Divine Service in the Cathedral Church,  
 “ they

“ they heard, as it thundered, two or three Claps,  
“ above measure dreadful, so that the whole Con-  
“ gregation, affected alike, threw themselves on  
“ their Knees, at this terrifying Sound. It ap-  
“ peared, the Lightning fell at the same Time,  
“ but without Harm to any one. So far then,  
“ there was nothing but what is common in the  
“ like Cases. The wonderful Part was this,  
“ which afterwards was taken notice of by many,  
“ That the Marks of a Cross were found to have  
“ been imprinted on the Bodies of those, who were  
“ then at Divine Service in the Cathedral. The  
“ Bishop of *Wells* told my Lord of *Ely*, that his  
“ Wife, a Woman of uncommon Probity, came  
“ to him and informed him, as of a great Mira-  
“ cle, that she had then the Mark of a Cross  
“ impressed upon her Body. Which Tale when  
“ the Bishop treated as absurd, his Wife exposed  
“ the Part, and gave him ocular Proof. He af-  
“ terwards observed, that he had upon himself,  
“ on his Arm, as I take it, the plainest Mark of  
“ a  $\dagger$ . Others had it upon the Shoulder, the  
“ Breast, the Back, or other Parts. This Ac-  
“ count that great Man, my Lord of *Ely*, gave  
“ me in such a Manner, as forbad me even to  
“ doubt of its Truth.” *Julian, &c.* Page 119.

I have only this Remark to make, upon this  
*wonderful Tale*; — That we have numberless such  
Tales as this recorded by the *Primitive Fathers*,  
Men of as great Piety and Holiness, as my Lord  
of *Ely*; which the Church of *Rome* pretends to  
believe,



believe, for the Sake of establishing the Credit of her own Miracles; but which all *consistent* Protestants treat with that Contempt which they deserve.

Upon the Whole, it is Matter of Astonishment to me, that all sincere Christians should not see, that there is no other possible Way to frame a Liturgy that shall be free from every Thing that is unintelligible, and from all controversial Points, but upon the Foot I have here proposed, which is;—That we profess to believe in one God, even the Father, who created us; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, who redeemed us; and in one Holy Spirit, who sanctifies us:—And, in Conformity to this, that we offer up all Prayer to God, even the Father, in the Name and through the Mediation of his Son Jesus Christ, for the Assistance of his Holy Spirit.

There can be no *middle* Way found out, between a Liturgy formed after this manner, and the Liturgy of the Church of *England*. For the Experience of all Ages has shewn, that if Men *deviate* from this Rule of Faith and Worship, they know not where to *stop*, but all is *Darkness*, *Confusion*, and *Contradiction*.

And I would only desire our Authors to give an Answer to this plain Question,—Whether a Liturgy so framed be not *sufficient* to Salvation, and

and to all the Ends and Purposes of Christianity?

This is the *best*, if not the *only* Security against Popery and Infidelity.

# CONCLUSION

IT is a melancholy Consideration, the various and strange Reasons Christianity hath met with in the World.

The Devil denies the Truth and Necessity of the Gospel Revelation. He is opposed to the Truth of the Gospel, and is in opposition to the Reason, and of all Facts that are in his own Knowledge. With the Discovery of the Revelation of the Gospel, there never was a full and complete Discovery of all Moral Duties, till Christ appeared in the World; at least, no Man could pretend a divine Authority to enforce them; therefore there was a Necessity that some Person should be sent immediately from God, for these two Purposes; and for this other Reason, to give Man a full Assurance of a future State of Rewards and Punishments. In the next Place, there was a Necessity the Son of God should be that Person, that the Prophecies concerning him might be fulfilled;—that he might take a Human and a Sacrifice for

CONCLÚ-



## C O N C L U S I O N.

**I**T is a melancholy Consideration, the various and strange *Reception* Christianity hath met with in the World.

The *Deist* denies the Truth and Necessity of the Gospel Revelation. With respect to the Truth of the Gospel History, he may with equal Reason deny the Truth of all profane History, and of all Facts that come not under his own Knowledge. With respect to the Necessity of the Revelation of the Gospel; in the first Place, there never was a full and true Discovery of all Moral Duties, till Christ appeared in the World; at least, no Man could pretend a divine Authority to enforce them; therefore there was a Necessity that some Person should be sent immediately from God, for these two Purposes; and for this other Reason, to give Men a full Assurance of a future State of Rewards and Punishments. In the next Place, there was a Necessity the Son of God should be that Person, that the Prophecies concerning him might be fulfilled;—that he might lay down his Life a Ransom and a Sacrifice for  
sinful

sinful Men, to reconcile them to God, and to make them worthy of eternal Happiness;—and that he might be their Mediator to intercede for them with God, in whose Name they were to offer up all their Prayers to God. For as God is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, it was not fit, in his Wisdom and Government of the World, that Sin should pass unpunished; and that sinful Men should be forgiven, merely upon their Repentance, but for the Sake of Christ, who died for them. Nor are they worthy to offer up Prayer to God, but in the Name and through the Mediation of his Son. And it was farther necessary, that the Son of God should come into the World, that, after his Ascension into Heaven, the Holy Spirit might be sent to be the Sanctifier of all Hearts, and the Comforter and Supporter of good Christians under all their Difficulties; for so frail is the Nature of Man, that he is not able of himself to perform the Conditions of Salvation; at least, he is enabled to perform them with greater Perfection, and with much greater Ease and Satisfaction to his own Mind, under the Direction and Assistance of the Holy Spirit.

These Things are so reasonable, that I am firmly persuaded, no Man ever refused to believe them, but his own Wickedness and ungoverned Lusts, were the only Causes of his obstinate Infidelity.

The



The *Socinians* acknowledge the Truth and Necessity of Christianity to reform the World; and to engage Men, by the full Assurance of a Future State, to perform the Will of God. But how unreasonably do these Men *debase* the Love of God, and of his Son to Mankind, by asserting, “that He was no more than a mere Man?” And by this rash and groundless Assertion, contrary to the plainest Declarations of Scripture, destroy the strongest Motives to Obedience. And, not content to stop here, they deny, “that there “is any such Person as the Holy Spirit.” And, in order to maintain these Doctrines, what *Havock* do they make of the Scripture? what a ridiculous Sense do they put upon those Words of our Saviour, when he speaks in the plainest Manner, of his coming down immediately from Heaven; and of his existing with God, before he came into the World; — by *feigning*, that he was taken up into Heaven, as *Moses* of old into the Mount, to receive his Instructions, and then came down again to preach? And how absurdly do they interpret the Scripture, in denying the Personality of the Holy Ghost; when they must acknowledge, that if our Saviour *intended* to describe a real Person, or intelligent Agent, when he speaks of the Holy Spirit, he could not have done it in plainer and stronger Terms?

The only Plea for these Men, for I am persuaded many among them do really believe what they

they teach, and lead exemplarily good Lives, is this,—That they think it the only Way to preserve the Unity of God, or that the Father is the only true God.

But alas! how weak is this Plea! If others, contrary to the plainest Sense of Scripture, will assert, “ that the Son, and Holy Spirit, are each of them the one Supreme God, equal with the “ Father;”—is there any Necessity for them to run into the other Extream, and to assert, that Christ is no more than a mere Man; and that, by the Holy Spirit is not meant a real Person, but only the Grace of God? Is not the Unity of God sufficiently preserved, though we allow of the great and incomprehensible Dignity of his Son, and of his Holy Spirit? For of how great and incomprehensible Dignity soever these two divine Persons are, yet if they be not God equal with the Father, which they cannot possibly be, the Son might condescend to do all that the Scripture speaks of him; and the Holy Spirit might be sent by God into the World, for the Purposes which the Scripture declares.

Strange! that good and sensible Men should not see how much more this is for the Honour of God, and of Christianity; how much more it manifests the Love of God, and of his Son to sinful Men;—and how much stronger our Obligations are to obey the Will of God;—than if we

believe the Son to be no more than a mere Man; and that there is no such Person as the Holy Spirit.

The *Arians* indeed do not run into the same Extravagancies and Absurdities, as the *Socinians*; they do not *debase* the Son of God, as these Men do; or deny the Personality of the Holy Ghost; but they are guilty of great Presumption in asserting, “that the Son of God is created, and that “there was a Time when he was not;” — when the Scripture does not affirm this, and it is impossible for us to know, how the Son derives his Being from God; or that He may not have existed with the Father from all Eternity; not indeed by Necessity of Nature, but by the incomprehensible Will and Power of God. These Things are incomprehensible, not only to us, but, not improbably, to the highest Angels. This we may be certain of, that he is stiled, *The only-begotten Son of God*, plainly to signify to us, that he derives his Being from God, in a peculiar and incomprehensible Manner, so as to be distinguished from all other Beings; and, that he is the Person, or Being, next in Dignity to God his Father.

The *Scholastic Trinitarian* is he, who, as I mentioned above, runs into the opposite Extream to the *Socinians*; asserting, — “That God is Three “Persons; or that the Father, Son, and Holy “Spirit, are the One supreme Being.” This is utterly

utterly irreconcilable, not only with Reason, but with the Doctrine of the Old and New Testament, from the Beginning to the End. He, who has this Faith, can have no distinct Notion of God, or of his Son, or of his Holy Spirit. He acknowledges in *Words*, the Humiliation, Incarnation, and Suffering of the Son of God, but in *Reality* he denies the Whole. For if you ask him, how the Son did all this? whether he did it in his *own* Person? he gives you no direct Answer, but talks of a *mysterious Union*, between the Son of God; and a human Soul; making him to be *Two Persons*, and that what the one Person did, the other did also. How utterly unintelligible is all this? how contradictory to the plain Sense of Scripture; which constantly speaks of God as one Person, one intelligent Agent only, and that the Father is He?—which gives not the least Intimation of the Son of God being united to a human Soul, or of his being Two Persons, which is impossible in the Nature of the Thing; but that He, himself, in his own Person, assumed a human Body, by being born of a Woman, that he conversed with Men, and taught them the Will of God in that Body, and suffered Death in that Body, the same as an Angel might have done, had God thought fit to send one of that high Order of Beings, instead of sending his Son, to do all this.

It is not easy to determine, which of the two is the most absurd and extravagant *Fiction*;—that of the *Socinians*, who feign that Christ was taken



up into Heaven, before he entered upon his Ministry, to be instructed of God, and then came down to preach ;—or, that of the *Scholastic Trinitarians*, who feign, that a human Soul was created, some *Time* before the Creation of the World, they know not *when* ; which human Soul, at God's appointed Time, came down from Heaven, and was born of a Woman, and preached the Will of God to Men, and then suffered Death ; and that the Son of God was united to this human Soul, in such a Manner, as to *partake* with the human Soul in all this.

If this be not all Confusion, and turning the whole Scripture Doctrine of the Redemption of Man, by the Blood of the only-begotten Son of God into ridicule, no Words can do it.

Of these Men it may be truly said,—That they *believe* and *worship* they know not *how* nor *what*.

But though there be a great Number, who deny the Truth, and Necessity, of the Revelation of the Gospel ;—and others, who, though they acknowledge both, yet interpret it in such a Sense, as no unprejudiced Person who has read the Scriptures, with any Attention, nor any sensible Heathen who should read them, can possibly believe ; and who, though they seem to *differ*, (I speak of the *Socinians* and *Scholastic Trinitarians*) agree in this, That our Redeemer was a *mere Man*. A Doctrine which reflects the greatest Dishonour on Christianity, and its divine Author ;—yet there  
are,

are, blessed be God! a great Number, who maintain the Simplicity, and great Dignity of Christianity. Men, who believe in one God, even the Father; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, the Person or Being next in Dignity to God;—and in one Holy Spirit, who proceeds from God, the Person or Being next in Dignity to the Son;—and who offer up all Prayer to the One and only true God, even the Father, in the Name and through the Mediation of his Son Jesus Christ, for the Assistance of his Holy Spirit.—Men, who have a just Sense of the amazing Love of God to Sinners, in sending his Son, and Holy Spirit, into the World; the One to die for us, and reconcile us to God; the Other to assist us in the Discharge of our Duty, and to comfort and support us under all Difficulties.—These, for Distinction sake, I call the *Scripture Trinitarians*.

Good God! what would Men have *more* than this? Let *Heathens*,—let *Papists*,—boast of the *Mysteries* in their Religion. But let not Protestants, let not Christians do the same. True Christianity is indeed *amazing*, and what could never have entered into the Heart of Man, but it is not *mysterious* or *unintelligible*. *Amazing* in the Love of God to sinful Men; for how could it ever have entered into the Heart of Man to conceive,—that God should so love the World, as to send his only-begotten Son, to die for us, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life?

*Astonishing*

*Astonishing* indeed is this Love, and is what the Angels desired to look into, but perfectly *intelligible*.—For there is no *greater* Difficulty in conceiving, that the *Son of God* should be thus *sent*, than that an *Angel* might have been sent in his stead.

And yet plain as this is, and so much for the Honour of God, and of our holy Religion; yet that great and good Man, Archbishop *Tillotson*, (so strong are the Prejudices of Education in the best of Men) among a great many other *weak* Arguments in Defence of the *Scholastic Trinity*, urges this for one, *viz.* “ That the World was  
 “ much given to admire Mysteries in Religion :  
 “ The *Jews* had theirs; and the *Heathens* likewise  
 “ had theirs; and almost every Nation had their  
 “ peculiar and celebrated Mysteries; which made  
 “ it *necessary*, that there should be Mysteries in  
 “ Christianity, to wean the Gentile World by  
 “ Degrees from their gross Conceptions.” *Sermon XLVI.*

Whereas the Truth is;—That the *Simplicity* of Christianity is what *distinguishes* it from all other Religions. This was the Description given of it by our blessed Saviour, when he said, —*To the Poor the Gospel is preached*;—That is, so plain was his Doctrine, that the Poor and most Illiterate might easily understand it.

And

And St Paul, alluding to the many Gods; and many Mediators; in the Divinity of the *Gentiles*; says,—*There is none other God but one. For though there be, that are called,—Gods many, and Lords many; to us, there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all Things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all Things, and we by him;—That is, there is one God, and one Mediator between God and Man, Christ Jesus.*

So far therefore is it from being true, what that excellent *Prelate* infers,—“ That Christians were “ to have their Mysteries, because the *Heathens* “ had theirs;” that our Saviour explains and sums up the Condition of the Gospel-Covenant of eternal Life, in these few Words; *viz. This is Life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* And St Paul condemns the Mysteries of the *Heathens*, both in their Faith and Worship; and establishes Christianity upon this single Foundation,—*That there is one God, even the Father; and one Lord or Mediator, his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ.*

Let that *antichristian* Church, the Church of *Rome*, practise the same *Arts* which the *Heathen* Priests did, to keep the People in *Ignorance*, and to make them *dependent* upon their Teachers, by making their whole Faith and Worship mysterious and unintelligible; but let all Protestant Churches



Churches teach Christianity in that *Simplicity*, which its divine Author, and his Apostles, did before them, that the People may *believe* and *pray* with their *Understanding*; for such Faith and Worship only can *promote* Piety, and be *acceptable* to God.

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